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Policies and Procedures Minutes 02 11 2008

Approved February, 2008

Arlington School Committee
Policies and Procedures Subcommittee
February 11, 2008

Members present:

Ron Spangler, Chair
Sean Garballey
Jeff Thielman

Also present:

Nate Levenson, Superintendent

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 AM.

1. Approval of Minutes, January 18, 2008

On a motion by Mr. Garballey, seconded by Mr. Thielman, it was VOTED 3-0 to approve the minutes of January 18th.

2. Old Business

Mr. Garballey reported that Cindy Bouvier has offered to come brief the subcommittee on the timeline for full implementation of the Wellness Policy. Mr. Levenson noted that Cindy will be presenting to the full committee in June. The subcommittee thanks Cindy for her offer, but will look forward to the presentation in June.

3. Policy BBA: School Committee Powers and Duties

The subcommittee and Mr. Levenson discussed ways to clarify the provision in the proposed amendment to this policy that the committee review and approve Principal contracts. Mr. Spangler said that it is proper for the committee review all contracts for compliance with budget and policy. Mr. Thielman said it is important to distinguish between approval of the contract terms and approval of the actual hire, which is outside of the committee's powers. Mr. Levenson had previously expressed reservations about delay in the hiring process that would result from this approval step, but realized that contract terms could be pre-approved. Mr. Spangler cautioned that it is still desired that every Principal contract be approved, not just a single template, and that the approval be sought around the hiring date. The revised proposed amendment is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

4. Policy CBI-E: Superintendent Evaluation Tool

Taking up this topic from the November 13, 2007 meeting, Mr. Spangler presented a draft amended policy CBI: *Evaluation of the Superintendent* and CBI-E: *Superintendent Evaluation Tool*. In introducing the proposal, Mr. Spangler noted that the problems identified with the existing policy and tool were, in diminishing order of importance:

- Timing (in June) required three new members to evaluate a Superintendent they had worked with for less than two months
- The evaluation tool was not used in a consistent manner by all committee members
- The Superintendent found written comments to be the most helpful, but not all committee members provided the same level of written feedback
- The evaluation tool does not clearly specify whether the evaluation is to be top-down or bottom-up
- The factors use in the evaluation are in some areas redundant, in other areas inappropriate or unrealistic, and may miss certain aspects of job performance the committee should be reviewing

The subcommittee had previously decided to follow a relatively lengthy process or review and revision, beginning with a review of Arlington's and other districts' instruments, followed by drafting of a new instrument, followed by full committee and public input, followed by adoption.

Mr. Spangler noted that timing is one of the key issues, and that adjusting timing to enable the current committee to complete its review before the April election means time is short to revise the policy and the instrument. Therefore he proposed a new approach involving two phases.

- The first phase, to be completed as soon as possible, will address the first four bullet points above, but otherwise leave the evaluation factors in the current instrument largely untouched. This phase involves modifying the guiding policy (CBI) for the long term, but modifying the instrument (CBI-E) for one year (2008) only.
- The second phase involves modifying the instrument (CBI-E) for the long term, including revising the factors used in evaluation and possibly the scoring method.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman, seconded by Mr. Garballey, it was voted 3-0 to recommend the approach above, and the policies attached hereto as Exhibit B, to the full committee for adoption.

5. Employment of Counsel

The subcommittee discussed the request of Ms. Burns, referred to it by the full committee on January 22. Mr. Garballey agreed to ask a representative of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees to attend the next subcommittee meeting to provide information on the subject.

6. Next Meeting

Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, February 25th at 8:30AM, pending availability of MASC's Jim Hardy.

Tentative agenda includes employment of legal representation and approval of activities, and continuation of the three-year policy review.

7. Adjourn

On a motion by Mr. Garballey, seconded by Mr. Thielman, it was voted 3-0 to adjourn at 9:35 am.